

Guidelines for Optimizing Waste Segregation

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1. Hand washing sinks should have waste containers lined with clear bags beside them to capture paper towel waste as solid waste rather than red bags. Red bag waste is automatically put into the biohazard stream.
2. Every copier and printer should have an appropriately sized recycling bin beside it, not a trash can. Tremendous savings can occur once this is implemented since paper waste will be diverted from the landfill, and directed to a recycling facility where such wastes can actually become revenue generators.
3. Every soiled utility area and every department should have a "battery waste" collection container. This should be plainly labeled and readily accessible so batteries can be properly disposed of either as recyclable or hazardous waste (depending on the type of battery) and, most importantly, kept out of the 'incinerator-bound' waste stream.
4. Clear bags should be used for solid waste so staff can see through them to know what they are handling. 80% of the waste cans should be lined with clear bags, since MOST of the waste will either be solid waste or recyclable waste if properly segregated.
5. Cadmium-free red bags should be used to capture biohazard waste. Red bags should be placed with careful discretion and under the control of the Waste Manager. Red bags should not be randomly issued for wastes. Housekeepers must know specifically which containers are supposed to be lined with red bags. Other containers (the majority of them) should be lined with clear bags.
6. Cadmium-free sharps boxes and containers should be used to capture sharps waste. These containers should be changed out by housekeeping staff on a designated schedule, and as needed to ensure worker safety. All sharps containers should be ordered under the auspices of the Waste Manager to avoid inadvertent procurement of sharps boxes with cadmium for colorant.
7. Wherever there is a vending machine, there should be recycling bins nearby to capture vending machine-generated wastes. This would include such wastes as aluminum cans, #1 plastic soda bottles, newspapers, steel cans, etc.
8. Require vendors to take back pallets.
9. Flatten cardboard at the point of generation. Transporting flattened boxes enhances the efficiency of transporting waste materials. Flattened boxes reduce volume and limit the amount of wasted airspace in collection carts. This measure can reduce the number of trips necessary to move materials to the baler. Use a knife/blade to flatten boxes quickly.
10. Rinse cans whenever possible. This reduces odors and reduces the likelihood of having insects swarming around can collection containers. This is especially necessary in food service operations where the can waste is not removed from the area daily.
11. Pay attention to collection container sizes and frequency of pick up. A bag of segregated materials can weigh much more than a bag of mixed trash. Adjust container size and collection frequency to achieve the optimal situation of just enough pick ups that are not too heavy to retrieve. (A 40 pound waste handling weight limit for the housekeeping department is suggested to prevent injury).
12. Institute mandatory facility-wide waste education annually; post waste program guidelines in every department, on-line, and in employee handbook; print recycling guidelines on mugs, napkins, table tents, in paycheck stuffers, newsletters, etc.